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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

Lines to the bereaved.

"Weep not for the dead, but for the living."

Oh weep not for those, who have gone to their graves,
And quietly slumber there,
Who have heaved their last sigh, and have shed
their last tear,
And have ended with sorrow and care;
For in Jesus they sleep, and their precious dust,
Is placed in his guardian hand,
And they wait for the dawn, of the last glorious
morn,
To rise at his sovereign command,
Arrayed in white robes, and invested with palms,
In his glorified presence to stand.

Oh weep not for those who, no more on the earth,
Are living and happy above,
Who have joined the bright throng, and unite in
the song,

Of praise to the Savior they love;
Oh dry up your tears, and banish your fears,
And tread the same path that they trod,
Why wish them again, in sorrow and pain,
To sin, and "pass under the rod,"
Rather hasten to share, in their glory there,
In the unsuffering Kingdom of God.

But weep for yourselves, for you still remain,
In a world of sin and woe,
For darkness beclouds, and thorns pierce the
feet,

In whatever pathway ye go,
In the happiest lot, in the sunniest spot,
That wealth or friends can give,
There is many a care, and many a snare,
Through every hour you live,
And even religion's sustaining power,
Does not exempt, but relieve.

Oh weep for your children, for they are still
In a world where evils assail,
And over their hearts, inexperienced and prone,
The temper with care may prevail,
As you look with joy on your guileless boy,
And hope paints the future so bright,
You do not know, but that child may grow,
To turn into darkness, your light;
And involve your latest declining years,
In a sad and gloomy night.

But pray, for God is our refuge and strength,
To shelter when storms arise,
To uphold you, when troubles press you down,
And wipe the tears from your eyes,
He will send relief for your every grief,
And from every danger will save,
From an enslaving world and an evil heart,
From hell and the darksome grave,
And by his grace securely kept,
A radiant crown you shall have.

Rejoice for a brighter day will dawn,
And your absent Lord will come,
The dead shall be raised, and the living changed,
And the saints all arrive at home,
And you, and your loved ones again will meet,
No more by death to be riven,
And together will stand at God's right hand,
A family saved in heaven,
And for grace below, and glory above,
All your praise to Him will be given,

ALPHA.

Religious.

A Baptismal Address.

BY THE REV. WILSON CARR, OF NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

"What doth hinder me to be baptized."—Acts viii. 38.

WE very commonly speak of the Acts of the Apostles as a history of the infant Church. This expression suggests a correspondence between the infancy of an individual, and the first stages of Church association. You may take the most simple experiences of life to interpret the coincidence. Little children are prone to imitation. If fathers are in the habit of writing, and mothers are in the habit of sewing, their children are anxious to copy their example long before they know either how to use the pen or ply the needle. As the children grow in years their imitation becomes more intelligent. The boys want something more than toys; the girls are dissatisfied with dolls.

The power of example produces its influences, whether for good or evil, either enforcing the precept by our own actions, or else rendering it powerless by our own negligence. Or, I might give you another illustration of this power of example. When our manufacturers export any new machinery, they generally send out able mechanics to set it in motion, and teach its use.

Now, the sojourn of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth had a like important end to serve. He said to his disciples, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you." John xiii. 15. When first called by grace they were simple and inexperienced as little children. Often, methinks, they saw with admiration and strove in vain to copy. He prayed, and they said, "Lord teach us how to pray." He cast the deaf and dumb spirit out of the epileptic child, and they said, "Why could not we cast him out?" He pursued his mission with undaunted courage, and they said, "Lord, increase our faith." But, here, in the Acts of the Apostles, you come to their period of riper years, when, by the Holy Spirit, they were enabled to follow his example as those who possessed the mind of Christ, while they copied his manners.

There were two things of inestimable value which the Eunuch of Ethiopia derived from the ministry of Philip:—First, Light for the understanding to direct his eyes to Jesus; and, secondly, Light for the footsteps to guide his feet in the way of God's commandment. In fact, the narrative suggests three interesting questions:—Dost thou understand? Dost thou believe? What hinders thee?

1. Understandest thou what thou readest? Here is light for the understanding. That was a great epoch in the history of the Church—as well as in the life of Christ—when our blessed Saviour came to Nazareth, entered the synagogue, stood up to read, found the place where it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," Luke iv. 18, 19. Then, appropriating the text to himself, he began to say, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." Well might the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue be fastened on him. A new light was thenceforward thrown on the old Bible. Jesus Christ was that light. And ever afterwards did he continually expound, with the utmost clearness, how passage after passage of Scripture was day by day fulfilled in the progress of his life. But after his resurrection from the dead, he more fully showed them how all things that were written in the law of Moses, and in the Psalms, and in the prophets had their fulfilment in himself. Thus he opened to them the Scriptures, and opened their hearts to understand the Scriptures, that they might be able to do the work of exposition as he had done it. He opened the Book himself first, then he loosed the seals, and subsequently he gave them the keys to open the sacred treasury themselves.

In the Book of Acts you will see still more of this great work of exposition which formed so striking a feature in the life and labours of the Apostles. Did Judas by transgression fall? They could find out directly a passage in the Psalms which anticipated it—"Let his days be few, and let another take his office." Did multitudes gather together on the day of Pentecost? and was the Spirit plentifully poured out? They could turn to the Prophet Joel and read a prediction. Did the Jewish rulers, elders, and scribes assemble to devise means for preventing the spread of the Gospel? David's prophetic psalm occurs to their memory—"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" The narrative of the Eunuch of Ethiopia furnishes us with a beautiful picture of the happy way in which the mystery of Scripture is unriddled, and at the same moment the eyes of the understanding enlightened to perceive the truth. An officer of high trust in the court of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians—being devoutly disposed—came up to Jerusalem to worship. I may observe in passing, that "Candace" appears to have been a name common to the Ethiopian queens, just as "Pharaoh" was to the Egyptian kings. And when it is said "he came up" to Jerusalem, we may almost assume him to have been either a Jew or a Jewish proselyte. Many such were scattered in foreign countries, and habitually attended one or more of the great annual feasts. On his return, sitting in his chariot, he was engaged in reading the Scriptures. The carriage had reached Gaza, a city or site of a former city, on the confines between Palestine and Egypt (see Zephaniah ii. 4), sixty miles south-west of Jerusalem. Thither, Philip the Evangelist had been directed by the angel of the Lord to journey. And now, as his eyes greeted the chariot, the Spirit of the Lord bids him go and join himself to it. He runs up thither, hears him reading out aloud from the Prophecies of Isaiah, and salutes him with this question, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" And he said, "How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him." Happy meeting! An earnest teacher and an earnest student.

You remember the passage, "He was led like a lamb to the slaughter," &c., from Isaiah liii. 7, 8. Was the text so very difficult? Were there any hard words, any curious and mystified

expressions? No. But yet the Eunuch, like an intelligent man, saw the exact point that needed interpretation. "Of whom," says he, "spake the apostle? of himself or of some other man?" Ah, now you see the puzzling word! It is spelt H, E, he. And oh, it was a wonderful understanding in the mystery of God, when the disciples of our Lord first discovered that he meant Jesus Christ.

Nor is this all. The Eunuch had probably been long accustomed to read the Bible, but he had never seen a Saviour there before. It is a joyous discovery to any poor soul to find Jesus Christ in the Scriptures. Simeon and Anna first saw Jesus Christ in the Temple, and their delight was great. Simeon would have been well pleased to leave the world directly. John the Baptist first saw him on the banks of the Jordan, and he cried out in ecstasy, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." Philip the Apostle and Nathaniel first saw Jesus in the neighbourhood of Galilee. Zaccheus saw him at Jericho. What a blessed day is it with every disciple when he first sees Jesus. And where was it that the Eunuch of Ethiopia first saw the Lord? Was it in Capernaum? Oh, no! none of these. He first saw Jesus in the Bible; he distinctly saw Jesus in the prophecies of Isaiah. He was reading and Philip was expounding, when clear as a sunbeam this man of Ethiopia perceived that Jesus Christ was there.

It is remarkable that he was coming up from Jerusalem (where he had probably been to celebrate the passover). He had seen the lambs led up to the Temple. He had gazed on the blood streaming from the altar. His mind was just prepared, therefore, for the conviction to flash across him; he saw now by faith how Christ was led up quiet as a lamb to be crucified. How entrancing the vision!

"And canst thou e'er, by sin beset,
Such charms, such matchless charms forget!"

Ah no! to everlasting days the Eunuch of Ethiopia will remember Gaza. What joys! He has met with Jesus, and he will never part with him again. He has found Jesus, and received him, and his heart is content. He has heard the quickening voice, and he is alive to die no more. He has believed on the Son of God, and he hath everlasting life.

Were Jesus Christ now on earth, I might ask you if you ever saw him, as Nicodemus, or the woman of Samaria did? Should you say "Yes," I might ask you again, Where did you see him? Was it as he sat on the mountain side, or as he was moored out on Tiberias, the beautiful lake of Galilee? Was it in the populous city, or in the desert apart? Was it sitting at meat in the house of Martha and her sister Mary at Bethany, or standing in Pilate's judgment-hall? But as Jesus Christ is not now on earth, I will rather ask you if you have seen him by faith, as the Eunuch did? Do you say "Yes." And can you remember any of the places where you have beheld him. In the Psalms? In the Levitical law? In the Prophecies? In the Four Gospels? In the Epistles of Paul? Or, was it in the ministry of some devout servant of God? Or might it be peradventure in the experience of some aged saint? What sort of a view did you obtain of him? Did you see him as the atoning priest, or as the devoted sacrifice? Did you see him as more comely than the children of men? or was his visage marred more than any man? Wilt thou e'er forget? Is it a poor transient impression Christ has produced on thee? or has it changed thee so completely that thou art henceforward a NEW MAN?

That was a remarkable expression of Philip, when he asked the Eunuch, "Believest thou with all thine heart?" Some people appear to believe without any heart; but the heartiness appears both in the manner and the result of his understanding.

As for the manner, I have heard people talk as if there were four or five different faiths: faith of credence, faith of adherence, faith of apprehension, and such like. Brethren, there is one faith; and that is, of necessity, appropriating faith. It gets all the heart's desire from Christ, and gives all the heart's confidence to him. When the Eunuch perceived Christ in the Scripture, he saw him not only as a Saviour, but as his Saviour. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is not tantalizing, but comforting. It gives confidence and affection. It does not trade in doubts and misgivings. The blessed Spirit does not open one of a man's eyes to see Christ, and then hermetically seal up the other eye that he should be kept in darkness as to his personal interest in the great salvation.

Nor is the result less palpable. The discovery of Christ is beyond all comparison a vein of inestimable wealth. The man who first discovered a particle of gold on the Blue Mountains of the Bathurst estate in Australia, only acquired an incentive to further research. He doubted not that the further he went, the deeper he dug, and analyzed the soil, the more of the precious metal he would find to reward his toil. So it is with the man who discerns Christ in the Gospel-field. Perhaps it is but a particle of his

precious name lying on the surface of the Gospel that he first descries. But he saith, "There is hidden treasure here." The rich mountains of Bethor do sparkle with precious ore. The deeper you search, the larger will be the nuggets that reward your diligence. The precious substance is hid in every field, in every mountain, and in every river of our blessed inheritance.

II. The Eunuch believed. And after he believed he was baptized. Quoth he, "See, water! What doth hinder me to be baptized?" Now let water be never so plentiful, let the streams flow like oceans, you have no right to be baptized, if you do not believe. Faith is a prerequisite to baptism. But, if you do believe, what hinders you? I would press the inquiry as one which I could wish each believer to make his own. "What doth hinder me?"

"O! I see many hindrances." Let me answer for you, and describe some of them.

"What doth hinder?" "I did not see it," says one. "And pray tell me, my good friend, what it is you do not see. The baptistry is open; and it is full of water. Stand up, and you can see that. The Bible is open, the precept is plain; the manner of 'going down into the water and coming up out of the water' is graphic enough for you to see that. What now, to speak candidly, is it that you do not see?" "Well," say you, "to speak the truth, I do not see the use of it. There now! why is not infant-sprinkling just as good? It is much less trouble; it is far more fashionable; and it is not near so conspicuous." Let me answer you. You are not required to see the use. It is enough if you see the precept, and the means of obeying it. Thus it behoveth us to fulfil all righteousness.

"What doth hinder?" "My own opinion," says another, "is that it is non-essential." There is surely no end of making excuses. The Papists used to puzzle me when they said that there were venial and mortal sins. But the fictitious Protestants perplex me more, when they talk of essential and non-essential duties. Would you, my dear brother, kindly show me the non-essential points in the instructions with which God made known to Moses how to make the tabernacle. Would you inform me the non-essential prophecies which Jesus passed over as needless to fulfil in going as it was written of him. Did our blessed Lord think it non-essential to say, "I thirst" upon the cross, that the Scripture might be accomplished? And if the commandment to be baptized is non-essential, you might favour us with a list of non-essentials, and inform us on what authority this non-essential expurgation of Scripture ordinances rests.

"What doth hinder?" An intelligent young gentleman called upon me the other day, and told me he had been studying the subject for some time, and was so perplexed by the diversity of opinions expressed by different writers that he could not come to the conclusion at present. I told him that it is a bad sign when a man begins to study any points of obedience. Suppose I say to my little boy, "Herbert, shut the door." He need not study, it is quite enough for him to do it. But now fancy that you see him stare vacantly at me. "Did not you hear what I said, my dear boy?" Yes, father, I was thinking of it. "Shut the door," I say again, in a cool and rather emphatic tone. More coolly, he asks me, "Whether I think it is cold to-day, and would it not be better if it were left open?" I feel impatient—I try not to show it; but I rise and shut the door myself. Or take another case. Suppose I say to my servant—"Be so good as to fill the bath." She makes no reply. That is annoying; I repeat my request. She then says, "Yes, sir, I will do it presently." I answer, "Directly, if you please." "Very well," is the response I receive, and that in a hesitant tone of voice. She puts a few drops of water into the bottom, and upon my remonstrating, she assures me "that was all she was accustomed to do in her last place; she was brought up to think that was right." Now, my friend, your reasonings with God are a hundred-fold more impertinent. Happy for us that he is the God of all patience and his long-suffering is inexhaustible. Most solemnly, I assure you, it is not desirable for men to study the precepts, but it is desirable to obey them. The Rabbis of old studied the law closely, but they did no honour to it by their glossaries. It had been far better that they should have taken it as they found it, and yielded submission to it as they read it. They made void the law by their traditions. And you lay waste the ordinances by writing and reading disquisitions upon them.

"What doth hinder?" And, strange to tell, not a few answer, "I really do not know. I quite see the ordinance as a precept of Scripture. I am a Baptist in principle, although I have never been baptized." Let me endeavour to answer for you.

Perhaps it is the world. As a lady, you live in a certain position of society, and you feel that you would forfeit the esteem of some of your friends; or you are a professional man, and you fear your reputation might suffer. Then you are ashamed of Jesus. That is your hindrance. Perhaps it is the flesh. That is you do not like the